

From: "Whitelaw, Duane" <whitelaw@ntfire.net>
To: <kande@parks.ca.gov>
Date: 7/25/2005 2:49:56 PM
Subject: Burton Creek Planning Process

Hi Ken,

I had an opportunity to do a cursory review of the plans in the works for Burton Creek. Your agency seems to be doing a comprehensive job which should result in a fine product when finished.

10.0 This Fire District will be called for medical emergencies and to assist with fire suppression in the Park. While it is not in our purview to make recommendations whether the Park should move forward or not, I am interested in ensuring that when called, we are able to gain access to wherever the need arises. This can mean anything from emergency access roads wide enough for fire engines to helicopter landing sites for seriously injured patients. Please consider this in your long-term planning. The Public Resources Code can be particularly instructive in these areas. We would be willing to discuss strategies for these kinds of amenities when the time presents itself.

10.1 We have also been hopeful that your project could provide a secondary means of ingress/egress to the Highlands Subdivision in the event of wildfire or other emergency blocking the main access road. This includes a need for both homeowners and the students/employees at the High School and Middle School. I recognize this is outside of your area of responsibility but it could be a huge collateral benefit to that area.

If you have any questions or think the Fire District can be of any assistance in the planning process, feel free to contact me.

Duane L. Whitelaw

Fire Chief

North Tahoe Fire Protection District

PO Box 5879

Tahoe City, CA 96145-5879

530-583-6913

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From: Jon Weedn <jonweedn@yahoo.com>
To: <kande@parks.ca.gov>
Date: 7/31/2005 11:02:03 AM

11.0 As a home owner in the highlands and user of burton crk. state park for over 20 years I would like to register my opposition to the proposed development. I realize the high demand for campgrounds in the area most particularly in july and august when traffic into Tahoe City already backs up in every direction on most days and always on weekends. The greatest impact would be felt when overcrowding in the area already exists. The proposed area is also one of the most used areas by local residents and vistors for biking and walking trails. I guess my idea of a walk in the woods is a little spoiled as campsites and crowds start to fill areas already being heavily used. Were the campgrouinds a year round asset and if they would be used during the times when it is not already very crowded I might feel differently...even though I would still view it as an encoachment to an already active recreational area. As a local and home owner I am hoping these plans will not come to fruition ..!

.most

particularly more roads and new campgrounds . Sincerely Jon L Weedn

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From: <RobinM3534@aol.com>
To: <kande@parks.ca.gov>
Date: 7/29/2005 12:50:17 PM
Subject: Burton Creek

To: Ken Anderson

Dear Mr. Anderson:

I am a frequent Tahoe visitor and Lahontan homeowner and would also like to reiterate my friend Carol Pollock's comments on the proposed Burton Creek Park development.

12.0 "We are deeply concerned and opposed to the Individual Campsites and any large Group sites.

*The fire risk and air pollution issue from even 50 campsites is enormous.

12.1 *The traffic consequences for travel on Highway 28 are huge. Putting a significant number of additional cars on that road is hard to imagine during busy summer days.

12.2 *Access on existing roads into Burton Creek would have an extremely negative impact on nearby residents. Right now the streets are dangerous to anyone walking on the road, children and animals.

12.3 *Finally, on a quality of life issue, you may not have any idea how sound travels throughout the area. Please come join me on the deck of our Tahoe cabin anytime there are baseball games at night at the new high school fields--you would be astonished by the sound, which is actually a long way away.

12.4 Improving the park for limited day use is a great idea--what about signs on trailheads, maybe restroom facilities? A small trailhead parking lot.

12.5 That's all it needs. Also, I would appreciate learning the Parks' policy on dogs in a developed Burton Creek Park.

12.6 Finally, as California State Parks contributor, I am deeply disappointed and dismayed by the Parks process and high handed attitude toward developing this property. There is significant local opposition for serious valid reasons.

Several years ago there was a huge effort by local residents to shape the park development in an appropriate way. And, it appeared that the Parks agreed. I am astonished that in face of this the Parks now propose to ignore that input and go ahead and frankly, I am offended by the characterization of local comment, and negative opinion, as just a bunch of local neighborhood people who want the park for their own. That's just insulting.

I and many others who spend time at Tahoe have introduced people to the beauty of the property and tried to encourage its use. Our objections to the development have a serious objective basis in fact. The current proposals are totally inappropriate for development in a sensitive, populated area with serious fire, environmental and traffic issues.

Sincerely,
Robin Machette
106 Requa Road

From: "mniles" <mniles@cwnet.com>
To: <kanda@parks.ca.gov>
Date: 7/31/2005 3:39:47 PM
Subject: Burton Creek

Dear Sir,

I wish to offer my my comments regarding the development of Burton Creek. These comments will be in opposition, but I hope you will read and consider them anyways. I understand there has been "no upwelling of public comment". We have a fairly laid back community so that is not surprising. I would though, venture to guess that there has not been a tremendous upwelling of 'pro' Burton Creek feedback either. My personal concerns are these: Campgrounds, trail plans, traffic, Conservancy land, housing and concessions. Campgrounds - I see open sites at all of our local campgrounds year round, how about filling those first. When that's done, how about Lake Forest, I understand there were some Forest Service offices planned there. I think it has great Lake access and, after all, belongs to the People of California. Trail plans - OK, a network of well marked trails would be nice. I encounter many People of California using the area, some ask for directions to a specific location. On the other hand, I must say that I have never heard of a Search and Rescue in Burton Creek. The reports of You getting lost there must have been a mistake since i'm sure you had peers to orient you on the area. Traffic - Please, No More Traffic for Dollar Hill. Be aware of your impact on nieghborhoods. There is a large development of residential homes coming and the likelihood of a recreation center (open to the People of California) in this area. Please, No Access Through Dollar Hill. Conservancy Land - OK, maybe I am cynical here, but I thought this was supposed to be preserved as Open Space. How and why do you get your hands on it?? I may be uninformed on this matter, but it does not seem right. Housing - Other campgrounds have people who live in trailers etc., I think that should be fine, Otherwise, let employees rent locally just like anyone else Working in the Parks is a great job already, employees don't need special housing treatment. Concessions - Don't take away from the community. Let people stop and shop in local stores or give back an even split of profits from any concessions.

In conclusion, I wish that you all would consider a master plan for other parts of State Land in the area instead of Burton Creek.

Regards,
Mike Niles
Tahoe City

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From: Ingrid Backstrom <ibackstrom@yahoo.com>
To: <kande@parks.ca.gov>
Date: 7/30/2005 9:32:44 AM
Subject: Burton Creek campground

Hi, Ken,

14.0

I wanted to write to express my dismay at the proposed Burton Creek Campground plans. Having moved to Tahoe and made my life here for two reasons--mountains and trails--it saddens me deeply to think that one or both of these might be compromised in exchange for camp spots.

I, along with many, many friends (both local and from around California and Nevada), use the trails in the proposed campground area (and in the network to which they connect) on a daily basis, from April through November, and many use them during the winter to snowshoe and cross-country ski, as well. As I'm sure you know, there's nothing like being able to enjoy the beauty of unspoiled wilderness on foot or on a bike for hours at a time--the trails in the Burton Creek area are vital to that Tahoe experience.

14.1

My knowledge of the camping infrastructure in Tahoe is limited; however, it does seem that a campground such as the one proposed in Burton Creek would only be full to capacity for the weekends of perhaps two months of the year. This seems like a very small benefit to a small number of users, at a huge cost to the majority of users who take advantage of this area on a very regular basis. Perhaps these folks could be accommodated at one of the many other campgrounds in the area, at a fraction of the price and land use implications? Again, I don't have experience with this, but it doesn't look like an equitable or efficient use of rich, beautiful land, to pave and section it off rather than keeping and improving the uninhibited trails in the area.

Thank you so much for your time and patience in reading our concerns--and thanks in addition for all the work you do to keep this area beautiful. From one user who values these trails as much as the snow in the wintertime, I'm asking that my and my friends thoughts be considered in this matter.

Sincerely,
Ingrid Backstrom
(530) 583-2839

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From: Jeffrey Rieger <jhrieger@sbcglobal.net>
To: <kande@parks.ca.gov>
Date: 7/29/2005 4:25:42 PM
Subject: Burton Creek Project

15.0

Dear Mr. Anderson, I am a 25 year resident of North Lake Tahoe. I am an active hiker, mountain biker, back country skier and general forest enthusiast. I have reviewed the plan for Burton Creek and am opposed to your campground plans. I would suggest that a good mapping project of the area and the reopening of camping in the area of the fiberboard freeway and across the street from the Tahoe City campground would better serve the public. Also, you might try counting the users in the Anton meadows burton Creek environs. I have it on good authority that the trails in the area are experiencing eight visits per hour during daylight hours in the non snow season, and more in the winter in and around the nordic center. If you wanted a tour of the area, as a member of the TNSAR and frequent user of the area with degrees in both planning and biology, I feel more than qualified to show you what is actually going on in our woods. Sincerely, Jeff Rieger

15.1

From: "Alain and Stacy Bordes" <stacyalain@earthlink.net>
To: <kande@parks.ca.gov>
Date: 7/31/2005 3:50:02 PM
Subject: Burton Creek State Park

Hello Ken,

16.0

Our family wanted to forward our thoughts about the potential Burton Creek Park plan for campsites and access roads. We live in the Highlands and have small children. The potential for more vehicle traffic through our neighborhood, on Hwy 28, and in the park area concern us. We also would be very UNhappy to deal with increased noise and pollution from the park, not to mention the affect of up to 200 campsites will have on the wildlife behind us and the increase threat of fire danger placed on our neighborhood.

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What would be wonderful to see would be a passive use park with increased trail signage so that more people (locals and tourists alike) could enjoy the trails and wildlife either on foot or bike. Campers and hundreds of people back there day and night would defeat the peaceful and serene place that Burton Creek Park currently is today.

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Also, we found it very interesting that when another Cal. State Park located near Hearst's Castle was recently acquired, Nick Franco, a California State Park District Superintendent, stated his desire for the park area to have trails phased in, but that he hopes that the park remains "pristine" 50 years from now. (VIA magazine, AAA Traveler's Companion, Issue July/August 2005; page 9) That should be exactly what our district superintendent could, and should, be saying about Burton Creek! Please feel free to contact us for further comment or questions at our email address or home phone (530)583-9334. Thank you for your time, Stacy and Alain Bordes

**To: Ken Anderson
California State Parks**

Date: July 30, 2005

From: Paul Vatisas, PO Box 1926, Tahoe City, CA 96145

Re: Burton Creek State Park (BCSP) General Plan Draft EIR of June 15, 2005

There are a number of concerns with the Draft General Plan and EIR for Burton Creek. Most of these were raised and recorded at the public meeting held in the High School in Tahoe City earlier in July.

First of all, my thanks to Ken Anderson and Hayden Sohm from State Parks for leading the debate on this plan and for offering solutions that reflect the realities of this part of California, particularly around new paved roads and unacceptable levels of increase in traffic in this already congested area.

The key points that I wish to make in my comments on the draft EIR are:

- The proposed improvements to the health of the forest are needed and should be implemented soon after the adoption of the plan
- The plan's proposed improvements for trails and to trailheads, so as to make the park more accessible, are also desirable
- 17.0 ▪ The proposed camp site should not exceed 200 sites, and no sites should be built until the traffic on 28 improves considerably (as stated in the current Draft EIR).
- Zero drive-in camp sites should remain a serious option because of the current high levels of traffic (as laid out by staff as an option in the public meeting).
- 17.1 ▪ Any new paved road to a camp site should come directly off highway 28 so as to minimize the impact on residential areas and reduce the level of development needed in the park – I strongly support the preferred alternative in the Draft EIR that goes in near Tamarack Lodge, and any decisions needed to make this access alternative possible.
- 17.2 ▪ I do not believe that an access road from Dollar Point is feasible.
- New maintenance facilities should be kept to a minimum, located close to existing facilities along highway 28, and not deep inside the park.
- I support the proposal to adjust the status of the small section of preserve close to highway 28 to facilitate the Preferred Alternative access road (near Tamarack Lodge).
- I support the proposal that some of the land around Dollar Creek on the adjacent Tahoe Conservancy property be designated as a Preserve.

Note that increasing traffic levels will have significant negative effects on the special environment that is Lake Tahoe through pollution and other measures, and that the State of California has already stated that it wishes to preserve this special area.

I hope that California State Parks will adopt a new plan taking into account the comments

above. Additional specific comments on the June 15 draft EIR for BCSP follow.

Specific Comments on the June 15 Draft EIR for BSCP

With specific reference to the Burton Creek State Park (BCSP) Draft EIR:

17.3

Executive Summary page 3: No campground or access roads should be built until the section of highway 28 between Burton Creek State Park and the entrance to Tahoe City close to the Tahoe State Recreation Area (TSRA, also a CA State Parks facility) reaches the Caltrans designated level of service D. This stretch of road is recognized by TRPA as one of the worst traffic areas, if not the worst, within the Tahoe Basin.

Executive Summary page 4: It is correct that, "Adding traffic of any amount to the Tahoe City area may be considered a significant impact." The traffic impact is itself reason to delay any camp site development (other than a walk-in camp site).

Main Document, bottom of page 7: No camp site should be built until the Caltrans level of service between the campsite entrance and Tahoe City is better than level D. No campsite should be built until any such proposed development can be built without forcing the Caltrans level of service (LOS) between the campsite entrance and Tahoe City to fall below LOS D.

Main Document, page 8: The local staff have correctly identified that the access from the area near the Tamarack Lodge is the correct point of access, and that this will require an adjustment to the current natural preserve boundary. This access alternative is widely supported by the people of California who live in this region.

17.4

Main Document, page 12: The statement that the park is used by only a few visitors is not correct. The park is widely used by many visitors year round for hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing, and the majority of the ones that I speak to come from California. I frequently hear comments that this group enjoy the wild nature of the BCSP and that they would like improved signage to allow for greater access.

Main document, page 26: Improved trail maintenance and signage is desirable and should be a priority following adoption of the plan. Signage should be in harmony with the natural feel of the park.

17.5

Main document, page 28: The TRPA thresholds for air quality have specific thresholds for traffic (VMT) and these are currently out of compliance.

Main document, page 29: Facilities should not be built until they can be done so while maintaining Level of Service D along highway 28.

17.6

Main document, page 31: The majority of visitors are not local residents but visitors from around California. Surveys undertaken by State Parks in 2001/2 of visitors to their facilities in this area clearly showed that the vast majority from around the State of California did not wish to see widespread development of BCSP.

Main document, page 32: A route into the park from Dollar Hill is not feasible and should be dropped as a possibility.

Main document, page 49: There is no additional 'carrying capacity' in and around the BCSP when it comes to traffic in summer.

17.7

Main Document, page 66: The NOP failed to identify as an option the position promoted by CA State Parks in its newsletter number 6 in 2002.

Main document, page 67: A campsite and associated building and development are not necessary to make this a shining example of the State Parks' system.

17.8

Main document, pages 68-72: I would support the Preferred Alternative, with an access road near Tamarack Lodge, over the other Alternatives presented in this Plan. However the draft EIR fails to identify and expand on the no campsite plan, previously identified by CA State Parks in newsletter number 6, as one of its Alternatives.

Main document, page 81: Increased traffic is not an unavoidable consequence of the plan. There will be no increase in traffic resulting from either no campsite or a walk-in only campsite.

17.9

Main document, page 83: No Alternative was presented that improves the management of BCSP, contains no campsite, and maintains use of the groomed cross-country ski trails. This is a failing under CEQA.

17.10

Main document, page 87: Wood smoke and traffic pollution will cause further deterioration in the Air Quality in the Tahoe Basin. State Parks is aware that air quality is already out of compliance as measure by the TRPA.

From: "Kris Kingery" <mountainkat@earthlink.net>
To: <kande@parks.ca.gov>
Date: 7/29/2005 11:33:54 PM
Subject: Park at Burton Creek etc.

Dear Mr. Anderson,

After reviewing the proposed park development plans including motorhome access and 200+ campsites that is being considered for the Burton creek/dollar hill State park I have many concerns, and hopefully some alternative ideas.

First, over the course of 35+ years that I have lived here, I have always been interested in why "city-dwellers" were drawn to this area. Simple, Lake Tahoe offers them the ability to relax, be away from cement air pollution, and car alarms, slow down the hectic pace of their lives, and remember simpler days when their parents took them camping. Yet, time and again I have been hearing over the last 10 years how much Tahoe has grown and how much it resembles their city life just with "more trees". The last comment from a couple that visited 3 years ago saddened me because I have felt it too. In the rush to make Tahoe "The New Aspen" we have lost the overall reason people come to enjoy it's beauty. If this proposed park development comes to pass, not only will further traffic tie-ups occur on the famously horrible traffic jam corridor of dollar hill, but with the potential of a rec center, the Nahas property development, and various county buildings all in the same area on a daily basis I would be surprised if traffic would move at all...especially during the busy summer season where it backs up to dollar hill on a daily basis.:-)

Also, even as a young child, I witnessed the first hand devastation and near evacuation of this area due to forest fires. Most city dwellers assume the "firepit" at the campsite will contain whatever fire they build and usually bigger is better. Also, the prevailing winds head upslope and if any burning embers catch fire, the possibility of a tree-top to tree-top fire in an area just ripe for a big burn could be devastating!

Also, in this day and age, the camp area is close to a major school which hosts summer kid programs and trainings for various sports activities. Often predators are drawn to these areas, and now we have made their access even easier, not to mention often campsites will be used for the summer as a means for cheap lodging for summer workers. In other areas of the country burglaries increase around these areas. Also, the possibility of people wandering off regular trails into close by residential backyards is a high likelihood and is currently already occurring in that area along with squatters pitching tents in the woods of the park. Also, several studies have shown the high risk to current wildlife and stream/riparian environments that will be affected. Sadly people just DO NOT stick to beaten paths; they want to explore! and in the process destroy habitats and scare wildlife. This is especially the case with motor bikes which have been in that area for over 25 yrs. despite signs that deny access.

Motorhomes love to bring off-road vehicles, and jeeps and bikes for easy exploration from their campsite home base.

SOOOO, how to mitigate and possibly change all the negatives to positives. Easy, develop park run campsites where the campers have guided experiences in the back country, all the while leaving their vehicles and "motorhomes of convenience" outside of the Tahoe basin. Basically, the businesses of Tahoe city and beyond can join by offering the camp discovery guest the full natural Tahoe experience. Not only does this promote more jobs for locals, but it promotes the local businesses in a quasi-concession type experience. Most importantly it creates a full natural experience for the guest all the

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while giving them the ability to have as much comfort as they want. For instance, a family of four leaves their motorhome with full kitchen, TV and comforts outside the basin. They are bussed or taxied in to the main headquarters near the "Lake of the Skye" inn (across from Lighthouse shopping). The main headquarters/trailhead starts there. They can either backpack in (all supplies exc clothes/personal items are rented from local outdoors stores), or go on fourwheelers (allows access for disabled or poorly fit/unconditioned etc.) to a camping area. Here many other families have their own campsites, but a main firepit, kitchen, restrooms, and other facilities are already set to share and monitored by a camp director. From here guided excursions of discovery can occur with even "kids-camps", adult walk-a-bouts and theme based nature walks can occur using local residents/workers and guides etc. etc. Imagination leads onto other ideas from here how to not only engage visitors in the whole experience of the outdoors, but also teaches new generations about preserving and coexisting with the environment. It become basically a guided discovery and even adults can learn to forget the pressures of job and home while learning and enjoying the outdoors like they did when a child. I really believe they can, especially if all the "little details" like where and what they will eat today is already taken care of by catered meals from local restaurants. What a great way to promote local restaurants! and promote more or return business than if campers recall that awesome meal in the middle of the wilderness they had.

The possibilities just keep growing beyond the scope of this letter, but I really wanted you to get a mental picture of what could happen and how it could increase /benefit both the environment, and the community without causing many of the negatives currently apparent including those which were apparent in 2002. It also may provide a much better income source than just "renting" campsites especially during this tough time financially for the state park system.

I have even more ideas which would tie in the state park issues listed here, with an alternative idea for the rec center, and more efficient use of the current bus system that I think would really benefit this community and also continue to "Keep Tahoe Blue" for generations to come.

If you are interested, please contact me at the E-mail listed below. My schedule precludes my ability to come to most meetings, but I try to attend when I can.

Thank you for your valuable time in reviewing my comments above.

Sincerely,

Kris

mountainkat@earthlink.net